

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

A341
M34M

MONTANA WEATHER AND CROP SUMMARY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Statistical Reporting Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Weather Bureau

Cooperating with
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
Montana State University

Released: April 21, 1969

WEATHER SUMMARY, 6-MONTHS, OCTOBER 1968
THROUGH MARCH 1969

The length and severity of the 1968-69 winter is well known by farmers and ranchers in Montana. The plains of central and north central Montana experienced the coldest winter on record -- from December, 1968 through March, 1969. Most of the remaining areas east of the Continental Divide experienced the second coldest four consecutive months on record. Weather records in Montana date back to the 1870's. The cold weather west of the Continental Divide was not generally of record proportions; however, there were several periods of extreme cold.

During October, near normal temperatures and less than normal precipitation occurred throughout the State. No major cold spells occurred. Wide variations were experienced in November's weather across the State. Temperatures averaged above normal in the north central and eastern divisions, and near normal elsewhere. Precipitation varied from very light in the north central and northeast to heavy in the south.

The first two weeks of December were drier and warmer than normal. Cold air spread southward over the area east of the Continental Divide after mid-month; then severe cold, accompanied by snow and local blizzard conditions, spread through all sections beginning the 26th.

The cold air remained entrenched over most of the area east of the Continental Divide until mid-March. The average temperature at Havre from the first of December through the end of February was 1.4° above zero. The last week of December and the entire month of January were particularly bitter. There were several periods of severe blizzard conditions in mountain passes and the Flat-head Valley. Havre's average temperature during the entire month of January was -11.3°. Sub-zero cold was quite general the last half of January. Havre experienced 380 consecutive hours of below zero temperatures. Great Falls recorded 325 consecutive hours of temperatures colder than -10°. The coldest reported during the winter was -55°, which occurred near Hinsdale on January 25th.

Unusually heavy snowfall during January added to the miseries. Helena received a record January snowfall of 36 inches. Summit, in Marias Pass, south of Glacier National Park, received 104.4 inches of snow that month. Much of the snow remained on the ground until late March as a general thaw did not occur from mid-December until mid-March.

In mid-March, when the thaw began, temperatures warmed gradually, allowing melting of snow to proceed in a gradual and orderly manner. Local high water problems did occur from snow-melt and icejams, but threatened major flooding did not materialize.

CROP AND LIVESTOCK SUMMARY, 6 MONTHS, OCTOBER 1968
THROUGH MARCH 1969

HARVEST PROGRESS: Small grain harvest activity continued in scattered areas into the first week of October. Hay harvest had reached 80 percent completion by October 1st. Potato harvest was 10 percent, dry beans 45 percent, and corn silage cutting was one-third completed. Sugarbeet harvest was underway with 5 percent of the crop dug. Because of killing frost on October 2nd and 3rd in most areas of the State, corn silage harvest was completed by the middle of October. Sugarbeet and potato harvest was completed early in November. Yield and sugar content of the beets were good.

WINTER WHEAT: Seeding of the 1969 winter wheat crop had reached 65 percent completion by October 1, after some delay by rain and snow. Soil moisture was adequate in all areas of the State. Winter wheat seeding reached 95 percent completion on October 14. Wheat stands were reported good throughout the State, with only scattered reports of fair to poor.

There was very little wind damage. Cool weather in some northern areas kept growth of the new crop below normal. Grazing of winter wheat was very limited except in the southeastern district where grazing contributed to the fall feed supplies. In late December, snowstorms brought snowcover which protected the winter wheat from the elements.

The 1969 winter wheat crop began to green in many areas by the end of March, but some remained dormant. Fieldwork had been reported only in a few fields.

RANGE LIVESTOCK: Movement from summer ranges of cattle and sheep was at 35 percent completion by the first of October. Fall rains provided the moisture for good regrowth of grasses, and fall grazing was better than it had been in several years. Stubble fields and many early planted fields provided ample fall grazing. Cattle and sheep went into the winter in good condition. At the middle of November, 7 percent of the State's range cattle and 8 percent of the range sheep were receiving supplemental feed. Most of the supplemental feeding was necessary in the western one-third of the State. After a mild fall, winter arrived with extremely cold temperatures. At the end of December, ninety percent of the range livestock were receiving supplemental feed. In January additional snow closed virtually all grazing. This made winter travel difficult. Snowmobiles and horses were used in moving feed to livestock.

Cows and ewes were in generally good condition, but shrinkage was more than normal. Hay and other roughages became short in the northwestern part and eastern third of the State as well as some other isolated areas. Hay prices jumped upward in hay shortage areas. Hay was hauled in from distant surplus areas.

Calving, lambing and shearing began in early February. Because of the deep snow, cows had trouble finding an adequate place to give birth to their calves. Newborn calves and lambs were in generally good condition, but extended cold left them with somewhat lower resistance against disease. Scours and pneumonia caused more deaths than normally. At mid-March, the long awaited spring thaw came to Montana. This opened up grazing and filled livestock watering reservoirs. The opening of many winter ranges reduced the need for supplemental feeding, but at the end of March 90 percent of the State's range livestock were receiving additional feed. At the beginning of April, calving was one-half complete. Lambing and shearing were 40 percent complete.

PRECIPITATION: 6-Month Total, October 1968 - March 1969 (Inclusive)

Station	Precip- itation	6-Month Normal	Station	Precip- itation	6-Month Normal
WESTERN DIVISION					
Alberton	9.28		Missoula WBO	6.44	5.49
Bigfork 13 S	10.83		Olney	15.46	
Creston	11.59		Ovando	8.70	8.15
Darby	7.75	8.24	Paradise	10.34	
Deer Lodge 3 W	3.29		Philipsburg	4.59	5.23
Drummond	5.91	3.74*	Pleasant Valley	10.06	10.85
East Anaconda	5.41	4.79	Polson Kerr Dam	7.06	
Elliston	5.84		Potomac	7.73	
Eureka	7.11		St. Ignatius	6.34	5.79
Fortine 1 N	9.43	8.44	St. Regis	15.44	
Hamilton	6.78	5.55	Seeley Lake	15.55	
Haugan	21.05	22.27	Stevensville	6.80	6.14
Heron 2 NW	22.53	24.10	Sula 1 NE	6.72	
Hungry Horse Dam	22.06		Summit	24.92	
Kalispell WBO	9.72	7.33	Superior	11.45	8.78
Kalispell	8.03		Swan Lake	16.83	
Kila	8.13		Thompson Falls	16.76	12.62
Libby 1 NE	12.87	11.77	Trout Creek	21.73	
Libby 32 SSE	18.18		Troy	18.59	
Lindbergh Lake	14.76		Troy 18 N	25.39	
Lolo Hot Springs 2 NE	16.26		West. Mont. Br. Sta.	5.05	
Lonepine	6.86	5.89	West Glacier	18.62	16.32
Missoula 3 NE	8.33	5.29			

*Estimated Normal

PRECIPITATION: 6-Month Total, October 1, 68 - March 1969 (Inclusive)

Station	Precipitation	6-Month Normal	Station	Precipitation	6-Month Normal
<u>SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION</u>					
Alder 17 S	3.52		Hebgen Dam	20.08	14.53
Belgrade FAA AP	5.34	4.17*	Jackson	5.64	
Boulder State School	3.39		Lakeview	15.24	
Bozeman, MSU	7.22	6.48	Lima	2.51	2.72
Bozeman 6 W	5.03		Norris 3 ENE	5.34	
Bozeman 12 NE	14.41		Norris, Madison PH	5.24	5.84
Butte FAA Airport	3.74	3.15	Pony	5.26	
Dillon FAA Airport	3.09	2.12*	Trident	3.30	
Dillon WMC	3.26	3.22	Twin Bridges	3.66	
Divide 2 NW	4.69		Virginia City	5.91	4.42
Ennis	3.35	2.28	West Yellowstone	13.00	11.59
Gallatin Gateway 26S	8.47		Whitehall 7E	3.19	2.11*
Glen 4 N	2.48		Wisdom	4.27	

<u>NORTH CENTRAL DIVISION</u>					
Babb 6 NE	4.48	6.02	Harlem	3.49	3.35
Big Sandy	2.62	2.82	Havre WBC	3.08	3.28
Blackleaf	1.91		Illiad	2.82	
Brady	1.59		Joplin 1 N	1.00	
Browning	6.55	4.64	Loma 1 WNW	5.16	
Chester	1.74		Lonesome Lake	2.65	
Chester 26 NNW	2.44		Loring 10 N	1.96	
Chinook	3.87	3.27	Malta	2.45	3.00
Choteau	3.19	2.11	Malta 35 S	2.80	
Cleveland 5 ENE	3.27		Many Glacier	22.77	
Conrad	1.87	2.69	Phillips 1 S	2.66	
Content	1.97		Rudyard 30 N	2.94	
Cut Bank FAA AP	1.11	2.41	Saco 1 NNW	2.29	
Del Bonita	4.39		Santa Rita 14 N	5.71	
Dunkirk 14 NNE	1.75	2.73	Shelby AP	0.72	
Dupuyer 7 WNW	2.27		Shonkin 7 S	7.48	
Fairfield	2.61	2.40	Simpson 6 NW	1.82	2.04
Forks 4 NNE	2.40		Sweetgrass	2.03	
Fort Assiniboine	2.86	2.69	Telegraph Creek	3.52	2.76
Fort Benton	5.26	4.45*	Tiber Dam	1.47	
Geraldine	3.43		Turner	1.11	
Gilford	2.55		Valier	1.96	2.50
Goldbutte 7 N	2.07		Zortman	4.21	

<u>CENTRAL DIVISION</u>					
Augusta	3.12	3.76	Martinsdale 3 NNW	4.62	3.05*
Austin 1 W	6.10		Melstone	3.61	3.30
Canyon Ferry PH	3.70		Moccasin Exp. Stat.	3.57	3.09
Cascade 5 S	4.28	3.82	Neihart 8 NNW	5.32	
Cascade 20 SSE	4.02		Raynesford 1 W	4.22	
Denton 1 NNE	4.14		Rogers Pass 6 NNE	9.93	
Flatwillow 4 ENE	3.01	3.04	Roundup	3.16	2.71
Gibson Dam	5.26	5.48	Roy 8 NE	2.97	
Grass Range	3.83		Roy 24 NE	2.69	
Grass Range 12 NE	1.91		Ryegate 18 NNW	3.10	
Great Falls WBO	5.04	4.35	Stanford 1 WNW	3.09	3.77
Harlowton	4.40		Sun River 5 SW	2.96	
Helena WBO	5.47	3.36	Toston 3 SW	4.09	
Holter Dam	2.94	3.42	Townsend	3.46	
Judith Gap 13 E	4.93		Utica 11 WSW	5.02	
Lennep 5 SW	6.09		White Sulphur Springs	3.51	7.27
Lewistown FAA AP	4.21	4.50	Winifred	3.19	3.70

* Estimated normal

PRECIPITATION: 6-Month Total, October 1968 - March 1969 (Inclusive)

Station	Precip- itation	6-Month Normal	Station	Precip- itation	6-Month Normal
---------	--------------------	-------------------	---------	--------------------	-------------------

SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION

Ballantine	4.76	3.59	Huntly Exp. Sta.	4.71	3.52
Big Timber	2.71	4.30	Hysham	3.10	
Billings Water Plant	3.74	3.97	Joliet	3.09	
Billings WBO	4.76	4.50	Kirby 1 S	5.94	
Bridger	3.30		Livingston FAA AP	4.25	4.14*
Broadview	3.71		Melville 4 W	5.75	
Busby	4.43	3.22	Mystic Lake	8.09	8.77
Columbus	2.75	3.75	Rapelje 4 S	4.08	3.70
Crow Agency	4.47	5.12	Red Lodge	7.25	6.63
Custer	3.64		Wilsall 8 ENE	5.30	
Gardiner	2.80		Wyola	5.11	5.13*
Hardin	3.96		Yellowtail Dam	7.04	

NORTHEASTERN DIVISION

Bredette	3.12		Mosby 2 ENE	2.57	
Brockway 3 WSW	1.69		Mosby 18 N	1.93	
Circle	3.83	2.05*	Nohly 3 WNW	2.10	
Cohagen	2.03		Opheim 12 SSE	1.79	
Culbertson	4.11	2.58	Raymond Border Sta.	2.92	
Fort Peck PP	2.09		Redstone	3.85	
Glasgow WBO	2.11	3.01	Richey	3.00	
Glendive	3.25	2.82	Savage	2.69	2.59
Haxby 18 SW	2.70	3.11	Scobey	5.42	
Hinsdale	5.32		Sidney	2.69	2.76*
Jordan	2.36	2.50	Vida	4.77	4.43
Jordan 22 E	1.53		Westby	3.48	
Lustre 4 NNW	1.96	1.97	Wolf Point 4 ESE	4.75	
Medicine Lake	3.84	2.42			

SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION

Albion 1 N	2.41		Miles City FAA AP	4.81	3.13
Biddle 8 SW	3.26		Mizpah 4 NNW	3.28	
Birney 2 SE	3.51		Moorhead 9 NE	3.88	
Boyes	2.71		Otter 9 SSW	4.89	
Brandenberg	4.44		Plevna	4.84	2.90
Broadus	4.13	3.75*	Powderville 8 NNE	4.19	
Carlyle 12 NW	3.79		Ridgway 1 S	3.62	
Colstrip	4.22	4.65	Rock Springs	1.44	
Ekalaka	5.15	2.90	Sonnette 2 WNW	4.18	
Ingomar 11 NE	1.53		Terry	2.07	
Lame Deer	4.83		Terry 21 NNW	3.02	
Maldred	2.84	2.80	Wibaux 2 E	2.82	
Miles City	2.87				

*Estimated Total

Frasier T. Galloway, Agr. Statistician in Chg. G. V. Cordell, State Climatologist
Statistical Reporting Service T. S. Aasheim, Extension Service

After Five Days Return to
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Statistical Reporting Service
P. O. Box 1726 - Helena, Montana 59601

Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. Department of Agriculture

OFFICIAL BUSINESS